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culture in question. The ultimate ground of the problem characteristic of any given cultural phase is, therefore, the intensity of vital force which expresses itself in this cultural phase. "Zeitprobleme sind daher Gradmesser der Lebenskraft und damit der Höhe des Lebensalters jener Cultur, aus der sie emporstiegen" (p. 3). At the same time. "Ein Zeitproblem ist das Bewusstsein eines Uebels des Gemeinwesens" (p. 5). We have therefore to seek a formulation of the course of civilization "as the resultant of a clearly determined law." And since mankind is but a part of the organic world, human civilization is but the resultant of the same forces which determine the development of species in plant and animal life. Now, the sweeping characteristic of the life process of organisms is a continuous decline in the intensity of the forces engaged. Observed phases of development are therefore expressions of stages in the decline of intensity of the life process. This law holds throughout organic life, and as the course of organic development and of culture proceeds we have, as the result of advancing decrepitude, an advance from a blind but fierce assimilative growth, through instinct, feeling, reflection, to rationality and to pure reason. The latter phase of development, the phase characteristic of senile decay, is now upon us, and our social problem is an expression of the evils peculiar to the social organism at this stage. The working class of the present day is the class of pure reason.

With this clue the author cheerfully constructs his comprehensive theory of cultural growth, and apart from this grotesque resort to analogies and metaphysical entities there appears to be but little of a theoretical kind that is new or characteristic in the volume. The theoretical contribution here offered may be taken as an extreme case of that recourse to mystical interpretation, which any reader of the later German speculations in social and economic theory must be prepared to face. But for all his mysticism, the author shows a wide acquaintance with the data of his subject, and no mean capacity for turning them to account.

T. V.

Pamphlets socialistes: Le droit à la paresse; La religion du capital; L'appétit vendu; Pie IX au paradis. Par PAUL LAFARGUE. Paris: V. Giard & E. Brière, 1900. 12mo. pp. 164.

THESE discourses, reprinted here in collected form from widely separate dates, are held in the light and easy vein characteristic of M.

Lafargue when he aims to be entertaining. The first two are well-known pieces, of a satirical purpose; the two latter are of the same class, though newer and less well known. The whole is excellent in its kind, with an excellence characteristic of the propagandist literature of which it is an exceptionally effective sample. As commonly happens in the case of the socialistic satire from the continent of Europe, the jests are too broad, of too maudlin a complexion to appeal with full effect to English, and particularly to American readers. This is particularly true of the later ones of these pamphlets of M. Lafargue's. The satire is overstrained to such a degree as to defeat its own purpose.

T. V.
